1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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844 [824] base. The cord was in former times planted with a seed yam and the spot marked. When the yam grew up it was pounded and given to the child to eat, in the belief that it would add to his strength. The stump of the cord is licked constantly for a few days by the midwife, who uses mouthfuls of hot water. No beliefs are attached to the placenta, which is buried at the back of the house. Twins are not considered unlucky. Nor are albinoes. But idiotic or deformed children were taken to the bush and abandoned. The mother's abdomen is swathed in string bandages, which she continues to wear throughout the weaning period, the intention being to preserve the figure. She also keeps her body regularly smeared with red earth, as this is believed to be good for her milk. This custom is widespread in Nigeria, being found, e.g. among the Kare-kare of Bornu. The original object of the practice was probably to ward off evil influences, but it serves as a public announcement that she is weaning a child, an announcement which is advisable, as a woman may not have sexual relations during the lactation period, which among the Katab is reckoned as three years, a rule which must act as a check on sub-marriages.

845 847 853 [171] [833]

553 A name for the child may be chosen by the father, mother, or relative. There is no fixed rule. A friend, or even a stranger staying in the house at the time of the birth, may ask that his name may be given to the child. Parents commonly confer the names of dead relatives, such as a grandfather or grandmother's or father's brother. Or the name given may have reference to some accidental circumstance at the time of birth. Thus a man called his daughter "Matan Malam", i.e. wife of a "malam"[1] because a "malam" was staying in his house on the day she was born. He called another daughter "Ladi" because she was born on Sunday.[2] One mother called her third daughter Kadayinkina, "You know I was right", as a reproof to a rival wife. Some common names are Ayashim (Friend of man), Tado (The Strong), Kaza (God), Duniya (Experience of the World). The name is assigned two days after birth without any ceremony. But if the mother had been unfortunate and lost a number of children previously, a ceremony accompanied by beer and prayers for the child's welfare would be held, the priest (Magaji Elenowum) being summoned for the occasion.

[1] A "malam" is a Muslim teacher.

[2] Lahadi or Ladi = Sunday.

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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836 grown-up men should have sexual relations with legal wives who may be under 13 years of age.

836 Pre-marital cohabitation is not practised to any great extent; for it is taboo between fellow clansmen; and as most of the clans are localized a boy of one clan has little opportunity of 848 sleeping with a girl of another. In the quite exceptional case [847] of a girl conceiving by a youth who was not her betrothed, it was stated that resort might be had to abortifacients. If these were unsuccessful, the girl would be married off as quickly as possible to her fiancé, who would accept the child as his own. The child would suffer no legal disabilities, and in fact would occupy the privileged position of an "eldest son". *Per contra* this custom may explain why it is that, among the Hausa, the eldest son is treated as a stranger.

585 Katab girls are only married between October and March, i.e. during the dry season, and not (as among the Kagoro) during 591 a particular month of the wet season. The bride spends her first year in the hut of her husband's mother, sleeping with her husband at night. At the end of the year she is given her own hut and is provided by the husband's mother with the necessary 853 cooking utensils. After the birth of a child no sexual relations may occur between husband and wife until the child is weaned, 834 the reason for this rule being based on the observation that conception interferes with lactation.

584 It remains to add that members of the same sub-clan frequently assist each other in procuring wives. It is not 613 uncommon for a man to hand over to a friend the bride-price 431 obtained for his daughter or niece in order that the friend may have the means to provide himself with a wife. The money may be treated as a loan, but is often given as a free gift.

586 It has been indicated already that no Katab husband can be sure that his wife of to-day will be living with him one year 851 hence. She may be approached by a clansman of her husband (but belonging to another subdivision) and invited to share his life. If she prefers to remain with her husband she will say "No"; but if she wishes a change she will say "Yes", and refer him to her parents, to whom he will have to pay a bride-price. He may approach the parents in the first instance, and they may bring pressure to bear on their daughter. And so off she goes, perhaps enceinte by her first husband. It does not

According to
Temple, twins are considered lucky. An " unsound " child was drowned, at about the age of four years, " or sometimes later." Children are suckled two years, according to Tremearne, during which time the wife lives apart from her husband: during this period, in the case of the first-born of any union (see ***Marriage***, below), the mother resides in her parents' compound, according to Smith; and after its termination, towards the end of the dry season, she prepares beer for the annual *obwai* rites of her father's clan (see ***Burial*** and ***Religious Beliefs***, below).

Initiation

Boys are circumcised at about the age of eight years—whether or not ritually or in groups is not indicated. At about 10 years, apparently in groups, they are initiated into the *obwai* cult: according to Smith, each clan has its own *obwai* priest and shrine; whether any attempt is made to co-ordinate the initiation rites held by the different clans is not stated. Temple describes the initiation rites as follows (after Tremearne): " [The boys] are first shaved, greased and beaten, and are then taken to the sacred grove, but they may not yet drink with the men. They leave the grove and dance all night, and dancing and drinking goes on for another seven days, when they return to their houses, but they may not speak to a woman till another seven days have elapsed." During the course of their detention, the boys are told that *obwai* is a secret invention to discipline women, according to Smith. Revealing this secret to women was punished with death or banishment before Administration, and is still discouraged, though Smith states that " in 20th century conditions [*obwai*] does not command awe among initiated males, and has lost some former functions."

According to Temple: " The tribal marks are the same for both sexes and are inflicted at certain epochs in their lives—the boys have their foreheads scarified when they are able to hoe. A girl has her chest and back marked on reaching marriageable age. . . ."

As already indicated, there is said to have been no special mark to identify a man who had taken a head, but, according to Tremearne, a man " was not supposed to have attained to the full dignity of manhood until he had killed someone " (see p. 96, above).

Marriage

Smith's analysis of Kagoro marriage is the most detailed available for peoples treated in this volume. An adaptation of his more complete account follows.

In general, marriage among Kagoro conforms very closely to Meek's description of the institution among Katab. Basically, marriage is virilocal, though a couple may share the husband's father's or husband's mother's brother's compound. Polygyny is permitted, that is, a man may support several wives in his compound simultaneously; a woman may have several husbands simultaneously, in fact, but her several husbands always maintain separate compounds in different villages, and there she " visits " them.[84] Marriage contracts may be classified as follows:

(1) Primary: bride is unmarried.[85]
(2) Secondary: bride has been previously married to any man other than (i) a fellow clansman or (ii) one in the ***siendi*** relationship.[86]
(*a*) By betrothal.
(*b*) By capture.

[84] Smith rejects the term *polyandry* as applying among Kagoro: however, *serial polyandry* seems to this investigator useful and meaningful in this situation, if it is made clear that divorce is not implicit in the term.

[85] *N.B.*, traditionally, no such thing as divorce existed among Kagoro.

[86] As regards marriage in general, relations between Kagoro clans (*kwai*) are classified as *siendi*, or as *sendwang*: a man takes his primary wife or wives from among the previously unmarried girls of clans that are traditionally in the *siendi* relationship with his own clan; he takes secondary wives from among the *wives* of men of clans in the *sendwang* relationship with his own clan and living in another village. (Close examination of Smith's report does not reveal whether women born into the same clan as his own primary wife, when married to men of clans *sendwang* with respect to the man's own clan, are excepted.)

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When they are about ten years old boys are initiated in these mysteries. They are first shaved, greased and beaten, and are then taken to the sacred grove, but they may not yet drink with the men. They leave the grove and dance all night, and dancing and drinking goes on for another seven days, when they return to their houses, but they may not speak to a woman till another seven days have elapsed. 852

They do not marry until they are sixteen or eighteen years of age, their brides being three or four years younger. The procedure is for the suitor to give the girl's father from four to ten thousand cowries when he proposes. If he is accepted he adds one hoe, one goat, one dog and the flesh of another goat to the gift—an average example which varies according to the wealth of the contracting parties. Beer is prepared by his people, and taken on the wedding day to the bride's house, where drinking goes on for from one to ten days. On the first day the mother takes her daughter to the young man's house for a brief visit, and receives a complimentary present of 2,000 cowries or a hoe—later he comes to her house—and on the second day he takes his wife to his own house where she remains. There is intermarriage between certain tribes, *i.e.*, the Attakka, Moroa, Kaje and Katab, but a Kagoro man will prefer a maiden of his own or of the Attakka tribe, because the others refuse to clear grass for the farms. A virgin may only marry during the wet season, after the seed has been sown. At the end of the millet farming she puts on her married woman's costume and her husband celebrates the occasion by killing a dog and eating its head, liver, entrails and legs, while he gives the neck to those that helped him in courtship, and the remainder to his father-in-law. The blood of slaughtered beasts is always eaten, cooked with fat. If the wife is considered satisfactory her husband gives her mother another present. A girl has the right of refusal and can obtain a divorce, subject to her father's consent, for he retains the legal power to persuade her to go back to her husband, to leave him, or to marry her to someone else. He also has the right of possession over her children, unless her husband redeems them by payment of three goats each. This practice has been put down by the British Government. 582 585 [591] [252] [586]

Children are suckled for two or three years. Boys are named by their father and are circumcised, a very old custom. If a child proves unsound before it is about four years old, or sometimes later, it is thought to be a snake and may be thrown into water. Twins are considered very lucky. 862 304 553 845 847

A man's first wife has authority over subsequent wives and may even beat them, a right so fully recognised that, if these latter forget themselves so far as to retaliate, their parents give her beer. The women all eat together, helping themselves with their right hands, for men alone are allowed the use of spoons. 595 [264]